

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Original): An acidified starch comprising: from about 0.0001 to about 0.01 weight percent high-intensity sweetener; and an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 2 (Original): The acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 3 (Original): The acidified starch of claim 2 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 4 (Original): The acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 5 (Original): The acidified starch of claim 4 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The ~~method~~ acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The ~~method~~ acidified starch

of claim 6 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 8 (Original): A method of preparing an acidified starch comprising: forming a dough by combining flour with a water composition in an amount effective for providing 0.0001 to 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on a total weight of the dough; forming the dough into desired shapes; cooking the dough; and contacting the cooked dough with an aqueous composition that includes a food grade acid.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of claim 6 wherein the aqueous composition includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 10 (Original): The method of claim 8 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 12 (Original): The method of claim 8 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 13 (Original): The method of claim 12 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 14 (Original): The method of claim 8 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 15 (Original): The method of claim 14 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 16 (Original): A method of preparing an acidified starch comprising: forming a dough by combining flour with a water composition in an amount effective for 0.0001 to about 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on a total weight of the dough; forming the dough into desired shapes; and cooking the dough in an aqueous composition that includes a food grade acid.

Claim 17 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the aqueous composition includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 20 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of

lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 21 (Original): The method of claim 20 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 22 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 23 (Original): The method of claim 22 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 24 (Original): A method for reducing acidic flavor in acidified starch, the method comprising contacting a cooked starch with a blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener.

Claim 25 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes 0.005 to 0.2 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the blend.

Claim 26 (Original): The method of claim 25 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes 0.01 to 0.1 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the blend.

Claim 27 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the

high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 28 (Original): The method of claim 27 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes ~~includes~~ an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 30 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 31 (Original): The method of claim 30 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 32 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 33 (Original): The method of claim 32 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 34 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener is

contacted with the cooked starch in a coating drum for 1 to 7 minutes.

Claim 35 (Original): The method of claim 34 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener is contacted with the cooked starch in a coating drum for 3 to 5 minutes.

Claim 36 (Original): A method for preparing an acidified starch, the method comprising contacting starch with an aqueous solution of a food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener for a time and temperature effective for cooking the starch.

Claim 37 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the starch is cooked at a temperature of from about 90°C to about 100°C for at least about 3 minutes.

Claim 38 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the aqueous solution includes about 0.005 to about 0.2 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the aqueous solution.

Claim 39 (Original): The method of claim 38 wherein the aqueous solution includes about 0.01 to about 0.1 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the aqueous solution.

Claim 40 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting

of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 41 (Original): The method of claim 40 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 42 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the aqueous solution of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 43 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 44 (Original): The method of claim 43 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 45 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 46 (Original): The method of claim 45 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 47 (Original): A method of preparing an acidified starch product, the method comprising: preparing the dough; cooking the dough; introducing an effective amount of a food

grade acid into the dough or cooked dough; and introducing an effective amount of a high intensity sweetener into the dough or cooked dough; wherein the effective amount of food grade acid and high intensity sweetener is effective for providing an acidified starch product having microbial stability and without objectionable acid flavor.

Claim 48 (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein the amount of food grade acid is effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 49 (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 50 (Original): The method of claim 49 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 51 (Original): The method of claim 50 wherein the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 52 (Original): The method of claim 51 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 53 (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice,

potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 54 (Original): The method of claim 53 wherein the starch is pasta.